DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 071 SO 030 113

AUTHOR Matsui, Machiko
TITLE Comparative Study of Female Overseas Students from Japan and the People's Republic of China at an American University.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 48p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; Beliefs; *College Students; Comparative Analysis; *Females; Feminism; Foreign Countries; Foreign Students; Higher Education; *Sex Role; *Social Science Research; Values; *Womens Studies
IDENTIFIERS *China; *Japan

ABSTRACT

Women constitute one-third of the foreign student population in the United States. Research has shown that women's perceptions of gender roles change considerably through their experience in higher education. This study asks how women coming from one form of patriarchy to another perceive the impact of change on their roles as women. A review of the research literature revealed it was usually male-biased and findings were not specified by gender. This study, conducted at the State University of New York at Buffalo, looks at students in terms of the country of origin; field of study; degree of contact with U.S. feminism; marital status; and living arrangements in the United States. The students were randomly selected, and semi-structured open ended questions were administered to 8 female graduate students from each of two countries: the People's Republic of China and Japan. The women from China saw themselves as being treated at Chinese universities primarily as genderless intellectuals while the Japanese said they were forced to behave in a "feminine" way in Japanese society because of social pressures. Marital status and living arrangements proved significant, as single women enjoyed greater mobility and freedom. Exposure to U.S. feminism through friendships and course work related to Women's Studies were the most significant factors in changing attitudes and perceptions of sex roles. A 36-item bibliography is included. (NL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED322071

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FEMALE OVERSEAS STUDENTS FROM JAPAN AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AT AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

by

Machiko Matsui

Comparative Education/ Dept. of Educational Studies
State University of New York at Buffalo

Spring, 1988

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
MACHIKO MATSUI
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 020 113

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This paper is an exploratory study of how highly educated women who have come to the United States to study from Far East perceive the impact of their experiences in American higher education on their attitudes towards and expectations of their roles as women. The research will focus on female students who came from Japan and the People's Republic of China, where Confucianism is shared as a common tradition and where the sexual division of labor in both family and public life differs from that in the United States.

This paper will address the following questions:

1. How do female foreign students from Japan and the PRC perceive the impact of their experiences in American higher education on their attitudes towards and expectations of their roles as women?

2. Do their perceptions differ by country according to the different level of industrialization and westernization, or socio-economic system (socialist vs. capitalist country)?

3. Do their perceptions differ by their field of study (female-dominated vs. male-dominated field)?

4. Are there differences in their perceptions by the degree of their contact with American feminism?

5. Are there differences in their perceptions by their marital status and living arrangement in the U.S.?

Along with the current dramatic increase of the foreign student population in the U.S., there has been a growing number of studies on the issue of their adjustment. However, most of

them are based on male experiences. Very little research has focused on women. Researchers often neglect to indicate the gender of the population they study; even if they include women in their research, they do not specify their findings by gender. Given the fact that women consist one third of the foreign student population in the U.S., it is a serious neglect in the past research.

Unlike male foreign students, female foreign students have specific problems because of their gender. They have double disadvantages of being women as well as foreigners in an alien environment. Hence I assume that women might perceive the impact of overseas experiences quite differently from men. Moreover such special conditions of female foreign students raises an interesting question; how women coming from one form of patriarchy to another perceive the impact of such change on their attitudes and expectations of their roles as women. Cross-cultural research shows that women's perceptions of gender roles change considerably through their experiences in higher education. Therefore I anticipate that women raised in the society where Confucianism is deeply rooted might perceive the impact of overseas education on their roles as women significantly. Possible factors which might affect their perceptions are as follows; their country of origin, their field of study, the degree of their contact with American feminism, and their marital status and living arrangement in the U.S.

Firstly, their country of origin according to the differences in the level of industrialization and westernization or in socio-economic system might have different impact on their perceptions.

While the PRC is a socialist country with predominantly rural agrarian economy, Japan is one of the most advanced capitalist countries with fully industrialised economy in the world. The government of the PRC is ideologically committed to the implementation of policies leading to gender equality based on Marxist theory. The Japanese government has had no such policy until very recently. Despite these differences, two countries share the common tradition of the Confucian culture which has made significant impact on women's lives. This paper will examine how these differences in socio-economic systems and government policies mediate these women's perceptions of their attitudes towards and expectations of their roles as women.

Secondly, since women in male-dominated fields such as natural science and technology have different experiences due to different institutional setting, they might perceive the impact of their educational experiences as women differently from women in traditionally female-dominated fields such as education, nursing, and humanities. Because of the differences in institutional setting in higher education between the U.S. and their home countries, possible differences are anticipated such as larger or smaller proportion of women in non-traditional fields. Such differences might make different impact on these women's perceptions.

Thirdly, contact with American feminism might be important in influencing and changing female foreign students' attitudes towards women's roles. Women who have had greater exposure to American feminism through their contact with feminist scholarship

in their major fields, Women's Studies, and American feminists might have more consciousness-raising experiences than women without such contact; therefore the former might become more aware of women's issues than the latter.

Finally, female foreign students who are single or living alone in the U.S. might have greater exposure to the American culture and people than those who live with their husbands and children since the former usually have more freedom of mobility to explore the new environment than the latter. Therefore women who are single or living alone might perceive the impact of their overseas experiences as women quite differently from women living with their families.

This paper consists of case studies of female foreign students from Japan and the PRC who are enrolled at graduate program of the State University of New York at Buffalo, a large research university in the U.S. This campus is characterized by a huge number of foreign student population (around 2,000 among 27,000 students) in various fields from all over the world including 65 Chinese and 19 Japanese female graduate students. It also has one of the oldest, well-developed programs of Women's Studies in the U.S.

As I have found from the past studies, most quantitative research not only neglects to address gender issues but also fails to capture the individual's perspective. Since my objective is to investigate women's overseas experiences through their own eyes, qualitative research methods are used for my study. I conduct in-depth personal interviews with eight female students from the PRC and Japan respectively. The lists of the

students are obtained from the International Student Office as well as the Chinese and Japanese Graduate Student Associations. Because of the limited number of female students from two countries, my participants are selected randomly from the lists and through my personal contact as well. Interviews have been done between 1987 and 1988.

In order to analyze research questions, semi-structured open-ended questions were designed to encourage my participants to describe and evaluate their overseas experiences thoroughly and freely from their own perspectives. The purpose of this research is not to show statistical significance but to present various views and experiences of these female foreign students. Descriptive data based on the following questions are collected:

1. What female foreign students from Japan and the PRC perceive to be expected of them as women in their own societies in relation with education, career, marriage, family, and community/ political involvement?

Were their own aspirations as women different from these expectations?

2. Why did they come to the U.S.? How do they think they were able to do so?

3. How do they compare women's roles in work, marriage, family, and community/political involvement in the U.S. with those in their home countries?

4. What kinds of interactions in the U.S. they report as influencing their perceptions of their roles as women in relation

with education, career, marriage, family, and community/ political involvement?

5. How do they compare their educational experiences as women at an American university with those in their home countries?

6. To what extent, have they been exposed to American feminism through their contact with feminist scholarship in their field of study or Women's Studies courses, or American feminists?

7. What kinds of problems do they anticipate as women when they return home in relation with their career, marriage, family, and community/ political involvement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A substantial amount of research on adaptation and adjustment has been done parallel to the current dramatic increase of foreign students in the U.S. It has investigated the students' problems of welfare such as accommodation, health and adjustment to the host culture and value system mostly based on quantitative survey methods. However, very little elaborate qualitative research has been done on attitudinal and perceptional changes of foreign students.

One problem is that most adaptation and adjustment literature has been written for practitioners to help maladjusted foreign students, based on social psychology. Consequently it tends to look at individual psychological aspects without seeing structural issues such as socio-economic and cultural constraints. Since research on foreign students is relatively a new field, the literature is, by and large, descriptive

without any shared analytical framework. The results vary depending on different methodology, measurement, and the different phases of sojourn of the students. As Altbach puts it, "Research is characterized by a great deal of haphazard diversity in terms of topics covered, findings, and conclusions (Altbach 1985, p25)."

Several studies (Chu et al., Klein et al., Yeh) particularly focus on Chinese students mainly from Taiwan and Hong Kong, as Byers points out, corresponding with the number of Asian students which has dramatically increased over the past two decades due to the educational problems in their own societies (Byers 1971). Since the People's Republic of China opened its door for scholarly exchange from 1979 after 30 years of academic isolation between the U.S. and the PRC, research on students from the PRC has just been launched and is limited at this moment (Hawkins 1984). Strangely, except for a few studies in the 1950s (Niyekawa 1952), there has been very few substantial research on Japanese students, although they consist a significant part of Asian students.

Researchers find that Chinese students from Taiwan and Hong Kong are somewhat different from those who remain in their home countries (Chu et al. 1971, Yeh 1976). Their parents have higher socio-economic status and education. The students are less typical of their home culture and already more marginal and alienated from its tradition. They also have more pro-American attitudes. (Yeh 1969) However, despite these characteristics of Chinese students, Klein et al. find that they tend to be isolated from Americans and to build a strong Chinese sub-culture

based on the ethnic community network on campus while in the U.S.(Klein et al. 1971). Several studies show that, as they have stayed longer in the U.S., they become increasingly skeptical of American values and negative toward American people. (Klein 1971, Perkins 1977, Graham 1983) Interestingly, Yeh and Miller find that American students in Taiwan have developed a similar pattern to Taiwanese students in the U.S.(Miller et al. 1971). This fact suggests special difficulties in adjustment for Chinese students because of enormous discrepancy between the American and Taiwanese value systems, customs, and pattern of social relation.

As Perkins et al.'s study shows, compared to the foreign students from other countries, Chinese students distinguish themselves by social isolation (Perkins 1977). From the Chinese students' perception, they have suffered racial and religious discrimination and people's unfriendliness more than any other group. Graham's comparative study of Asian, Polynesian, and American students on the University of Hawaii campus also shows that Chinese students feel most "exclusion" in this multicultural educational setting, in contrast to Japanese students who perceive most "inclusion" on the campus (Graham 1983). These researchers attribute the reason for the Chinese students' social isolation to the traditional Confucian emphasis on scholarly achievement such as hard work and a task-oriented ethic and high parental expectation, which make them alienated from more fun-oriented and individualistic American students. In fact, Graham shows that Chinese students are the academically most

successfully adapted group among foreign students.

From the American view, these hard working Chinese students appear to fail social adaptation, but as Yeh posits (Yeh, 1976), the Chinese students themselves might see their experiences quite differently. Wei's study reveals, in contrast to research done by Americans, Taiwanese returnees highly evaluate themselves both in academic and social adaptation (Wei 1971). This contrast suggests possible ethnocentric bias among American researchers and the importance of examining the adaptation problems through Chinese students' own perspectives rather than American criteria, based on understanding the cultural differences between two societies.

In terms of the attitudinal change, Yeh compares returnees to other two groups, who are ready to go to the U.S. and who remain in Taiwan (Yeh 1976). His study reveals that a vast majority (95%) of the returnees become more cautious and reserved about westernization and more aware of and even more sensitive to the co-nationals' critical eyes than other groups who have never had cross-cultural experiences. They become more skeptical about "friendship" and "equality" between the sexes, admire the value of "traditional extended family life", and disagree with "pursuit of academic education for women" because "family life may be sacrificed by this". However, Yeh dose not specify the gender ratio of his sample, one cannot identify whether these changes are generalizable for both sexes.

Moreover Yeh's findings contrast to Kumagai's longitudinal research on Japanese male students (Kumagai 1977). She finds that as they have stayed longer in the U.S., they have

increasingly come to recognize and appreciate women's roles and adopt more liberal attitudes toward sex roles. Nonetheless, according to Kumagai, these changes have occurred not at the expense of appreciation of their own society and culture. She does not explain how these Japanese men can integrate two strikingly different values of sex roles between the U.S. and Japan. Given the persistent sex discrimination and the polarized socialization process between sexes in Japanese society, I assume such change might occur with greater magnitude among female students from Japan.

Based on these past studies, I would like to examine the following two questions: whether these findings are applicable to female students; and whether these characteristics of Chinese students from Hong Kong and Taiwan are similar to those of the students from socialist China.

Another major problem in the past research is that most literature is based on male experiences; researchers often neglect to indicate gender of their samples; even if females are included in the sample, the findings are not specified by gender. There is no substantial literature on female overseas students in general and particularly in the U.S. This fact shows serious neglect on this issue despite the fact women consist one-third of total population of the foreign students (Boyan 1981).

While most of the literature on foreign students is gender-blind, a very few studies have started to look at gender differences in overseas experiences. A study done by Goldsmith and Shawcross (1985) on female overseas students in Britain is a

case in point. They criticize the serious neglect of female foreign students based on male-bias in the past research and call for new research based on views and experiences of women themselves. Their categories of analyses are such as underrepresentation of female foreign students in the British academia, the students' backgrounds, determinants for overseas study, different problems faced by married and single women, and their experiences of sexism and racism both on and off campus. They point out lack of support and provision for the education of female foreign students in the U.K. Although Goldsmith and Shawcross do not address their perceptional changes toward gender roles, this is the only study that point out the impact of patriarchy on the female students' overseas experiences, from a feminist perspective.

A few studies particularly look at the impact of overseas experiences on their attitudes towards gender roles among foreign students from more "traditional" societies. Al-Qutaee (1984) compares Saudi Arabian students who have more than two years overseas experiences with those without such experiences. Her study reveals that the former rate masculine and feminine characteristics based on the Bem sex-role inventory scale in a manner very similar to American participants. Although her research does not specify gender differences, it shows that the individuals are significantly influenced by western culture through their overseas experiences and become more receptive towards the western type of gender roles.

Abdalla and Gibson (1984) identify the different pattern of the women's response in their study of overseas Libyan nationals'

attitudes toward the women's roles in work force. In their study, female participants, both students and wives of the male students, demonstrate more positive attitudes toward women's work force participation than males. They also find that the higher the educational level of women, the greater the probability of such attitudes appear. This research indicates that the impact of overseas experiences might be greater on women than men concerning their attitudes towards gender roles.

Namvar (1984) finds, in her survey of foreign graduate students, that women from both developed and developing countries have greater sex-role conflicts than men. Although women from developing countries hold more traditional views on women's roles than those from developed countries, both groups of women perceive the typical women of their countries in very similar ways. Women with a higher level of education believe in a less traditional roles for women and experiences greater role conflicts. Her study reveals that female foreign graduate students are atypical as women in terms of their less traditional beliefs of women's roles.

Very few studies on perceptional and attitudinal changes in sex-roles have focused particularly on women from Far East. A study done by Fong and Perkins (1969) is an exception. They examine female Chinese students' sex-role strain and adjustment by comparing with naturalised Chinese-American students with visa status Chinese students. Acoording to their research, although the latter have suffered series of discomfort and greater social disruption than the former in their adjustment to the life in the

U.S., they most strongly reject the traditional Chinese model of femininity such as reserve, patience, modesty, gentleness, and docility, while the former accept it most. It can be said that female foreign students are one of the most ambitious, courageous, independent, and self-reliant among women in their home countries. They are brave enough to break through their constraints and obstacles in their own society in order to go abroad for study. My research will explore the views of such a highly selected group of women based on the intensive interview method, which has almost never been used in the past research on their perceptions of gender roles.

FINDINGS

The participants in my research are eight female graduate students at UB respectively from the PRC and Japan. The Chinese participants range from the age of 29 to 55, one divorced, five married and two single. Among the married women, two live with their spouses in Buffalo and except for one couple, all of them left their children in China. All but the one are funded by their government or university in China or UB. Two of them are enrolled in traditionally male dominated fields (Engineering, Math) and the rest are in Humanities and Social Sciences (Education, English, American Studies, Linguistics). At the time of my interview, they have been in the U.S. for the period ranged nine months to four years. Except one visiting scholar, they are pursuing doctorate or master's degrees.

The Japanese participants range from the age of 25 to 40. The

striking difference from the Chinese participants is that all but the one who left her common law husband in Japan are single, although they were older than the average age of marriage for Japanese women. In contrast to the Chinese participants, seven of the Japanese students have supported themselves without any external funding.

All the Japanese participants are enrolled in Humanities, Art, (Music), Social Sciences (Education, Linguistics, Anthropology) and Nursing. It reflects the concentration of female students in traditional female subjects in higher education in Japan. They have been in the U.S. for the period ranged four months to six years. All of them are pursuing doctorate or master's degrees.

All the Chinese students come from intellectual families with privileged backgrounds. They are daughters of the government officials, the party cadres, professors, and researchers. They were raised from the beginning in an excellent educational environment. In China, the students had professional careers (researcher, university faculty, engineer, bank accountant). They define themselves "top students" and "excellent workers". All but the one come from the two major urban centers, Beijing and Shang Hai.

In contrast, the Japanese students come from more diverse backgrounds from working-class to middle-class families in not only major urban areas but also small local cities. Except the youngest one who has no work experience, all worked in traditional female occupations (English teacher of high school, private piano tutor, secretary, nurse, or clerical worker). Unlike the Chinese students who have mothers working as

professionals, a half of the Japanese students have non-working mothers. Yet, I find not so much correlation between their career aspiration and their mothers' occupational status. A majority of the Chinese students whose mothers are working as teachers say that they saw their mothers as their role models. They took it for granted that women work outside home. The Japanese students, whose mothers are a small business owner and a municipal office worker, have the similar opinions. However, other two women, whose mothers are assisting their husband's business, were rather discouraged their career pursuit and overseas study by their mothers. Four women with non-working mothers have career aspiration as high as those with working mothers.

The Chinese students are highly career-oriented. They come to the U.S. with the concrete purpose of career advancement and academic pursuit. Besides three students clearly state their sense of mission for a developing country like China.

> Pu: My assigned job was to translate news and to introduce American culture, society, technology, whatever. I thought if I could advance my knowledge, I could introduce new ideas and what's going on here to the people in China more accurately.

> Anyi: My government sent me here to learn new technology. ... I push myself harder and harder. Even if my government didn't give me any concrete task, I want to learn more and do better work, because my country needs new technology.

In contrast, the Japanese students have more relaxed attitudes toward overseas study. They came here more than just to study, rather to explore new experiences in the different cultures.1

> Yuko: I wanted to get a good command of English. I was also interested in communicating with Americans. I wanted to expand my experience. Besides overseas study was a kind of

"fashion" among my friends.

Sumiko: I worked as a high school teacher for 10 years. I came to think there would be no change in my life, if I continued my job. I wanted to do what I wanted. I wanted to get out of the routine.

Yet, all the Japanese students are, more or less, critical of the lack of opportunity for women and strict sexual division of labor in Japan. Apart from the difficulty in economic independence, five women state that women are forced to behave "feminine" because of social and psychological pressures. Except Kimiko who went to a prestigious and predominantly male university, most women deny overt gender-related discriminations in schools. Sex discrimination takes more subtle forms in Japanese schools. Some women point out they had less encouragement than boys from their teachers. Others recall that there were so few women in higher administrative and teaching positions in their schools. Yet, most students say that they were paid more attention than boys from their teachers because of their excellent academic standards.

Nonetheless once they entered work, they had to confront the reality. Mariko, an ex-clerical worker, and Sumiko, an ex-high school teacher describe their experiences of sexism.

Mariko: In Japanese society, femininity is more emphasized than masculinity. For instance, women shouldn't speak up, shouldn't be in a decision-making position. ... Even if I had more than 10 years of career, when I received a phone call, I was told, "I want to talk to a man who is in charge, not a woman!"

Sumiko: (At a small local school,) Older female teachers went to school early in the morning, cleaned the desks and prepared tea for male colleagues! ... I felt strange and called for a meeting with them, but they said "It's not a big deal, we want to do this. If you don't like it, you don't need to do so." ... I felt very uncomfortable.

Many women point out polite language, womanly attitudes, implicit dress code, and 10:00 p.m. curfew as their constraints. From their views, women in Japan are raised to be docile, obedient, quiet, and selfless "like a doll".

> Yuko: In Japan, even if a woman doesn't have a self, people around her take care of her and put her into a certain mold. She can live just like a doll. She can live even better without a self. If she has a strong self, she will have to hit her head always on the wall!

> Mariko: Here you are not required to behave like a woman. For example, I'm now crossing my legs in front of you. I've never never done this in Japan! ... Here nobody cares. They do this even before the professor. In Japan, there are so many requirements for women.

> Miyoko: Here you don't need to think what kind of language you should choose when you speak to your professor because you are a woman. When you speak Japanese, you have to use a special honoraric form of feminine language. Otherwise you are considered indecent and inpolite. But here you can talk to the person whatever you want without paying attention to the language itself.

Some of the Japanese women had tense relationships with their mothers who pressed them to behave like decent women and even arranged "omiai" (meeting with a prospective candidate for marriage) without their consent. They had to come through bitter struggles with their mothers when they decided to go to the U.S. The most painful case is told by Sumiko, a 35 year-old single woman lived with her mother. Her widowed mother strongly opposed her daughter's decision of overseas study.

> Sumiko: My mother totally depended on me as a daughter. She said,"If you desert your mother, I won't consider you as my daughter any longer. Get out of my house!" She was strongly opposed to my plan to quit a decent job and go to the U.S. She didn't even speak to me and cried and cried. I wasn't allowed to stay at home for a few months. Until the president of the school, where I worked, came to convince her for my sake, she never listened to my opinion.

Unlike the Japanese women, the Chinese women did not have such

troubles with their families. Their intellectual parents and spouses rather encouraged them to pursue their academic interests. An exception was Zhijuan, a woman in her 50s. She ended up with divorce from her "old-fashioned" husband, who wanted her to be a housewife type and strongly opposed her plan to study in the U.S.

> Zhijuan: My husband liked a housewife type which I was never like! He was upset all the time since I devoted too much time for political activities and teaching. ...He strongly opposed my plan to go abroad. He said I was crazy to do so at my age! ... When I got funding from the university, he said it's enough to go and see for a short time, no need to stay there longer. But for me it was a rare opportunity. I wanted to study and stay in the US at least for two years. We quarreled a lot. At last we ended up with divorce.

However, the Chinese women had much more difficulties when they had to confront authority. The local government or the work units which were afraid of brain drain tried to keep these intellectuals in their places.

> Xiyuin: The local government and my university didn't want to send me here. I had to struggle really really hard. I struggled more than a year. I almost gave up. Then finally they said OK. They wanted me to teach because of a serious shortage of teachers. Another reason was that my husband was already here, so they were afraid that I wouldn't come back.

The most extreme case was that of Zhijuan who had to wait for the permission for five years.

> Zhijuan: After I divorced my husband, my school wouldn't let me go. They thought I might not come back since I was single (divorced). ...I had a lot of obstacles to overcome. Finally I changed a work place and worked there for two years. Then they allowed me to go out. Yeah, I should have come here in 1981 and gotten my degree by now! I missed five years!

Except for one woman whose father was a high rank government official, the Chinese women were not allowed to bring their

children with them. A majority of women state that they do not regret leaving their children in China since they can concentrate on their study better. At the same time, they point out that this causes them enormous anxiety and homesickness. They have been constantly worried about their children's health, and emotional and academic development. While worrying about extra economic burden to raise their children in the US, almost all women say that they wanted to bring their children with them if the conditions allowed them to do so.

About their perceptions on gender-roles in the U.S., generally the Japanese women, freed from pressures from their families and society, evaluate American women, American culture and educational system positively, particularly American women's high career-orientation, their self-assertiveness, and their positive attitudes toward their lives, and emphasis on personal freedom, spontaneity, and self-expression in American culture and educational system.

> Yuko: My first impression here is that I am always asked my opinions, what I want to do, what I like, Yes or No. And I have to answer clearly. In Japan, I was never asked and never thought about it. I was always waiting for someone's advice or order. ... Here you have a choice for every single aspect of your life. ... When you go out with an American, he asks me where I want to go and what I want to eat. If I say to him, "I want to eat whatever you want." He is puzzled. In Japan, it's natural for a girl to depend on a boy. Here he thinks I'm strange.
>
> Kyoko: Here women can challenge their own lives again and again...This is a very good society for a woman to train herself to live on her own. Their way of thinking is very positive and optimistic. Being self-expressive is a good thing here. I re-discover myself which I tried to suppress in Japan.
>
> Midori: In Japan, most nurses are young unmarried women. Japanese women generally place their priority on their families, not on their work. But American women have clear

career goals and never say "I'll quit a job!" even when they are in serious trouble.

> Mariko: Women here do what they want to do, but they know what they want to do. ...In Japan, women like me in their 30s and 40s, how many of them know what they want to do? A majority work without any purpose, marry at a certain age, and then have children. They live on a rail. If you ask them, "What you want to do?" They can't answer. I think they were not given a chance to think about what they really want to do.

The testimony of Mariko, who worked as an office worker to support her family's medical expenses for her brother and never went to college in Japan, represents the life of a majority of Japanese women.

On the other hand, some Japanese women, through their personal contact with Americans, display their dissappointment. They are disillusioned by the fact that American women are not so much liberated from a double burden in their private lives and American men are not so liberal than they expected in Japan.

> Midori: I had an image of sex equality in American society, but I have found not much difference as I expected. When I see my American boyfriend, he is just like a "sodai-gomi (big trash) husband" in Japan. He doesn't do any housework at all! He can't. His mother seems not to train him to do housework.

Unlike the Japanese women, the Chinese women are generally more critical of American women's status comparing to that in China. Most of them say that women are better treated in China, at least in the urban areas. They point out more availability of childcare facilities, more visibility of women in non-traditional fields, and economic independence of women as examples of relative equality of women in China.

Some Chinese women even articulate the sexist American culture where women have to play feminine by wearing make-ups and womanly dresses.

Zhijuan: Outside the academia, women have to wear make-up and feminine dresses. Women pay too much attention to how they look like. Men seem to be polite and protective to such women. But you sense that you are a woman, a weaker sex, here. I never thought of such thing in China.

Jie: I think Chinese women are better treated than American women. When American women marry, many of them just quit their jobs, but almost all Chinese married women work. In China, since most women work, they have more privileges (menstrual leave, maternity leave) than men.

Pu: I've never felt I was a woman in China, but I do feel so here! Because American men are more aggressive and more persistent to their self-interest. Women are taken advantage of.

Pu also criticizes the American culture which encourages relationship between opposite sexes but discourages intimacy between same sexes.

Pu: I had lots of both male and female friends in China, but I never paid attention to their sex. I highly appreciated their friendship. In China, just ordinary friends could be so close. But here it's hard to make friends with a member of the same sex. The relationship between memebers of the opposite sex is much closer than that between memebers of the same sex. If you are too closer to your female friend, you are probably considered homosexual here! In China, it's totally different. We feel more comfortable with the same sex.

Rong's opinion is somehow different from others since she analogizes the Chinese women's status to that of American women comparing to that of other Oriental women.

Rong: Out of my personal contact with other Oriental women, I feel Chinese women are more like Americans. ... I'll categorize urban Chinese women closer to Americans and rural Chinese women with other Orientals. For example, We urban Chinese women are very equal, not submissive to men. We share housework. Since most Chinese women work and sometimes make more money, Chinese women have more say in both family and society.

Yet, most Chinese women are keenly aware of the enormous gap in the status of women between rural and urban areas in China. Especially those who went to the countryside during the Cultural

Revolution were impressed by the plight of rural women.

> Anyi: I think women's status in the countryside is much lower than that in the urban areas. Since I stayed in a dorm with other students, I didn't have much contact with peasant families. But still I heard some terrible stories such as female infanticide and wife beating.
>
> Rong: In the rural area, tradition is deeply rooted. If you are wife, you cook, clean, feed your children and pigs, and take care of your husband, that's it! It's your nature, your first task. In the city, if men can teach, women can teach. Some women can even make more money than men since they are better teachers. But in the rural area, that kind of primitive production requires a lot of masculine strength.

Nevertheless their perceptions of women's status, even that in urban areas, are different from what I know from literature on Chinese women's status.2 Some of them, with anger, present their views and information which could demonstrate the discriminatory treatment of female students at the entrance examination and recruitment policies for faculty positions. For example, Rong explains about her experience at the extremely competitive entrance examination right after the Cultural Revolution. She did not know the university's hidden policy of the age limit. Later she was told what happened to her application.

> Rong: Since my score was so good and my age was only six months older than the age limit, they kept my application file with other two files. One was a boy's and another was a girl's. Then they decided to take the boy and to throw away two girls! It made me mad. I got so angry!

Rong, like other women, also points out sexist practices in recruitment for faculty positions. Male graduates are usually favored over females. Some males were hired even though their academic standard was not high enough. It was because the university needed young males for the tasks which other faculty members did not want to do, such as carrying specially rationed

food, extra-teaching in rural schools, and taking care of students' affairs and foreign experts. They were eventually promoted to academic positions. Some women suggest further that the current Four Modernisation policies have worsened women's status since priority is placed on efficiency in productivity than gender equality; and that female graduates of their universities have been facing discriminations in employment. Yet, Rong, like other women, does not much criticise those practices. "I don't see them a serious problem. They are understood."

However it is remarkable that all the mothers, out of their own experiences, acutely state that Chinese women still suffer a double burden. I am interested to know how these women professionals, especially those with children, have coped with a double burden. Some of them say that they simply cut down the amount of housework, or asked help from their mothers-in-law or husbands, which caused a lot of friction and internal conflicts. For instance, Anyi, 35 years old woman, exclaims when asked how she has shared housework with her husband.

> Anyi: No, not at all! He hates housework. He is an associate professor, too busy to take care of it. So I do most. Both my parents and my parents-in-law help me out. Especially my mother-in-law takes care of my daughter. I took care of her for less than two years. I also hired a domestic help. But it cost me a lot. I sacrificed 60% of my salary! It's a big problem for Chinese women!

Then she adds that she has been always exhausted because of the lack of sleep when her daughter was small.

Kangkang, a 37 years old woman, articulates this point very clearly.

Kangkang: In China, women have at least a half responsibility as a breadwinner. You can't support your family by just one income. ... So Chinese women have a hard time because of a double work, one is paid and the other is unpaid - work and family.

It gives her a great preasure. She explains about her struggles with anger, criticising her husband, an artist.

> I was a top editor. I did more than any other male colleagues. But I realized that it was because I put much more time and energy into my job. Others didn't, just enjoyed themselves like my husband! I have primary responsibility for my daughter. I have another responsibility, my career. So I look older and older. See my husband, how young he looks!
> I want to be the best wife for him. I don't want him to be blamed to have a bad wife. So I have worked really really hard. ... I also want to be the best mother for my daughter. I sometimes feel guilty to spend so little time with them.

She insists that women should stay home when their children are small because it is their "nature" to take care of their children.

Yet, the younger women without children seem more confident to ask their husbands to share housework. For instance, Jie, a 30 years old woman, says that her husband has been very supportive and always willing to share housework. "He is not a traditional husband who wants to keep his wife at home." says she. She was also encouraged to pursue her advanced study in the US by her husband.

In order to reduce their dual responsibilities, most Chinese women withdrew from political activities defining politics as a male domain. Furthermore, in many cases, these women who have suffered as intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution seem very disillusioned by the party politics.

Rong: Once women get into political struggles, it's hard for them to get ahead. It's a male world. But I'm not interested in power. The things interest me are publication, promotion, to be a professor.

Zongjin: I don't want to acquire a higher position. I don't want to be a leader or a party member because the government policy changes so frequently. I'm really exhausted by politics. I hate that. I try to avoid politics as much as possible.

Interestingly, four Chinese women who have ever taken the courses of Women's Studies or concerning women's education distinguished themselves from the rest in their evaluation of women's equality in China. They are more aware of invisibility of women in decision-making positions and critical of the lack of feminist consciousness in China. All four women positively evaluate their changes in terms of opening up new perspectives, more awareness of sexism, and increasing self-assertiveness and confidence, through their confrontation with American feminism.

Pu: Before in China, I didn't see the society male dominated. Even though I saw many cadres, bosses, and presidents were men. I didn't see it unfair because we saw it everyday everyplace. We took it for granted. But since I came here, I took some Women's Studies courses which put some new ideas in my mind. I began to think and to see the society differently.

Zongjin: Before I really thought of sex differences. Women are good at certain things - housekeeping and childrearing- and men are good at others. ... I somehow felt men were better biologically stronger, nothing different intellectually though. But now I have a much stronger opinion. I can't stand the male attitude to look down upon women. It's not necessary for women to just stay home and take care of kids! If I hear from men such opinion, I would argue with them! Before I just accepted.

Xiuyin: Here there are more consciousness of feminism or women's rights. But in China, certainly no priority to women at all! ... I've learned quite a lot about women here. I kind of like it. It opened up a new perspective for things that I had never thought of before.
In this department, women are consciously treated more equally. Actually they are a stronger group. In China, in classes, it's always the men who speak up. ... As a teacher, I always felt they wanted me just to teach not to make any suggestions. Actually I made proposals for the department several times to improve teaching quality, but they just ignored me!

Zhijuan: Before in China, I knew very little about feminism. Feminism is considered a "petty-bourgeois" idea from the contaminated West in China. ... Since I came here, I've learned quite a few feminist theories. So I now have a better understanding of its diversity and richness.

Among the Japanese women, only Kimiko, who was involved in a feminist group in Japan, has taken Women's Studies courses. Yet, most Japanese women show some interest, positive or negative, in American feminism or Women's Studies.

Kimiko: I was impressed by the egalitarian and relaxed atmospher in Women's Studies classes. Before I thought learning in very passive manner. I always waited someone to teach me. But in Women's Studies classes, I am the subject to learn. I don't need to be ashamed of not knowing something. I can ask any question and express my personal opinion as a woman freely.

Miyoko: I think I'm influenced by feminism. For example, in my field, there is a feminist approach such as to examine female and male languages or to abolish sexist language such as a fireman and a chairman...etc. The language affects and shapes people's thought, such idea came out in the 1970s. But I'm not at the stage to decide my position.

Midori: In nursing courses here, sexuality is integrated. The issue how to deal with the patient's sex life is always discussed. In Japan, people are not yet aware of its importance. The issue of sexuality is hidden. ... maybe it's one of the influences of feminism. I think even in the U.S. it was unthinkable for women to talk about their own sex life or orgasm before the rise of feminism.

Mariko: Now I don't think women should be different from men. When I went back to see my friends in Japan, they were married and with two or three children. They said they want their daughters to stay home. But I think girls do whatever they want just like boys do. Maybe I've changed because to observe American women directly here is different from to know about them from books or TV in Japan.

Yuko: I do understand the women working for women's emancipation. But it's too much burden for me. I can't do it by myself. Yet, at least I want to change my children. If I have children, I'll socialize both boys and girls in the same manner. I'll let my son to help housework.

Since I have only two Chinese women in non-traditional fields, I cannot generalize about my findings compared to those in

traditional fields. These two Chinese women point out that the propotion of female students in their fields at their universities in China was much higher than that at UB. In their opinion, this fact makes their life somewhat easier here since their male professors and colleagues treat them as women and try to show their special concerns. In China, working as hard as their male colleagues, they never cared about their gender. They were not given special concern, either. In their opinion, being a female student in the male field in the U.S. is more advantageous because here they can negotiate with their male professors and colleagues more easily by using their femininity, for example, "just smiling at them and acting like a woman".

I also find interesting that both Chinese and Japanese women have ambivalent attitudes toward the traditional concept of femininity. While they clearly state women should be assertive enough in public, most of them still prefer traditional femininity such as delicacy, sensitivity, sensibility, mildness, gentleness, modesty, and compassion in their private life and criticize American women because of the lack of these traits.

> Jie: I still like women to be modest, mild and soft, not too aggressive. In my family, I don't want my husband listen to me everything. ... He is a man, a man should be stronger. In school, I should be strong as a teacher, but at home I want to be just his wife. ... But I don't want to pretend to do so. I do so because I like to do so.
>
> Xiuyin: I would sacrifice myself for my husband, if he has an opportunity. Yeah, I would, but I don't know how much I would (laughter). I don't think I'll totally give up myself. In China, It's pretty common for women to sacrifice themselves for the advancement of their husbands or children. ... But I don't want to be forced to do so. I won't do so under pressure. If you are happy to do so, why don't you do that?

Kyoko: Since I'm an Oriental woman, I don't want to be like American women, too tough, too aggressive, and lacking delicacy. I want to be flexible like a willow, so that even if I'm beaten up, I would stand up again. But not in a tough manner.

Miyoko: The other day, I was talking to an American woman at the party. When my brother, who visited me from Japan, asked me to go home, I quit chatting and tried to follow him. She was surprised and said to me "Why don't you say to him 'No, I'm having a good time here. You'd better wait for me.'" ... But I thought my brother might have been exhausted. I think such consideration is very important.

There are noticeable differences in their future goals. All the Chinese women say that they would eventually go home because their jobs are waiting for them. Most of them say that they could be treated equally to similarly qualified men when they go back. They expect career advancement and better opportunities, although they anticipate certain difficulties such as lack of academic freedom and poor facilities for research. On the other hand, the Japanese women are much more pessimistic for their uncertain futures. Sumiko, an ex-high school teacher, draws the most dismal picture of her future.

Sumiko: Even If I go back, I wouldn't have a good job. There are so many overseas returnees in Japan. Having only a M.A. degree is useless. I'm too old to be hired by a company or a high school. I don't expect much. I did what I wanted, so I'll pay the price. I don't expect that I'll be able to get a better job than teaching at high school.

They do not simply expect better opportunities even with higher degrees because of the Japanese employment system based on age, sex, and old boys' networks. Therefore most women say that they would not go back if they could find decent jobs in the U.S. or elsewhere.

ANALYSES

Given the limited number of my participants, any kind of generalization is difficult to make from my research. Yet, according to my data, it is obvious that Chinese and Japanese female students at UB come from very different backgrounds. While the former come from urban intellectual and professional families, the latter come from more diverse backgrounds including the working class. The reason seems to lie in the significant discrepancy in the level of development, in other words, the degree of industrialization and urbanization between two countries.

In a developing country like China, higher education maintains a highly selective meritocratic system in order to make the best use of its scarce resources.3 Despite the socialist nation's ideological commitment to an egalitarian society, only the brightest students, often with urban intellectual backgrounds, can enter universities. Eventually they form a tiny minority of urban professionals at the modern state sectors of the developing economy. A few women with high education have secured places among these urban elites.4

The Chinese overseas students constitute a selected portion of these elites. Their status is far from that of the vast majority of women engaged in agriculture or informal sectors. Their privileged status allows them to develop high self-esteem and career-orientation. From their childhood, they went to the best schools being encouraged by parents, teachers, and society to pursue high academic accomplishment. They have deeply

internalized the socialist ideal of gender equality such as "Women hold up a half of the sky; whatever male comrades can do, women can do." Those who went to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution proudly state that they did men's work - heavy physical labor - as much as men. Indeed, as their typical statement "I've never thought that I was a woman in China." shows, they built strong identification with genderless intellectuals.

Nevertheless their privileged status frequently turned out to be constrained. Because of their much needed talents and skills, they had often to sacrifice their personal desire for the sake of the state. Zhijuan's lament "They made me teach just after one year of college education because of a severe shortage of qualified teachers. I didn't want to teach! I wanted to learn more! I wanted to travel around and to see different people and culture! But there was no choice for me." was more or less shared by other women. Most women had to struggle with the authority who were afraid of brain drain, in order to realize their overseas study. Because of their importance for the nation's development, they have to go home or they are obligated to say that they would go home. Yet, they still anticipate the difficulties of readjustment when they return to China, such as the lack of academic freedom under a strict political control of the state.

Politics plays an undeniable role in these women's lives. They live in a society where jobs, housing, ration cards of food and clothing, in short, everything is assigned by the government. Even if they tried to stay away from politics, it deeply

influenced and penetrated their private lives. During the Cultural Revolution, all my participants, either themselves or their parents were sent to the countryside to be "re-educated" by peasants. Some of their parents were persecuted as counter-revolutionary and went through bitter struggles. According to Rong, "Life is pre-determined in China. There is not much room left for personal choice."

Nevertheless these women try to maximize their limited opportunities. Coming through tremendous struggles, here in the U.S. they not only learn new knowledge and technology but also explore the new culture and people with their critical eyes. Although they generally admire the abundance of choices and material wealth for American women, they are keenly aware of the constraints American women have to face, such as the inadequacy of childcare facilities, the difficulty of economic independence, and the heterosexist culture which forces women to play feminine and inhibits the same sex intimacy. For the Chinese women, economic independence is the foremost sign of gender equality and a source of their power in both family and society. As Pu puts it, "We are poor, but there is one thing we can be proud of. That's women's equality, economic independence."

It does not mean, however, that they have been free from patriarchy. They still have to conform to the Confucian norm of a "good wife and wise mother", as well as to the ideal of genderless intellectuals. Like other socialist countries, China has not set its priority to provide material conditions for

mobilization of women such as socialization of housework and development of household technology. Rather, as researchers show, the government has imposed socialist puritanism and forced them to be "super women" who can cope with a double burden, to be a good worker as well as a "good wife and wise mother", moreover often with a triple burden including political participation.5 Hence the Chinese women have tremendous burdens on their shoulders. The testimonies of my participants, especially those of the mothers, clearly show how much burden they have had to carry. Their dual responsibilities have also deprived them access to decision-making positions and political power.

Although most women present various examples of gender related discriminations, they still insist on gender equality in socialist China over and over again. They tend to undermine their personal experiences and to conform to the official ideology of gender equality, such as "Under Socialism, both sexes are - or are supposed to be - treated equal." It is one of the most striking contradictions that I find in my interviews. In my view, it is partly because they are the survivors of the system and given certain privilege as selected elites, even if they have had to overcome severe discriminations. As Rong puts it, "I don't see them a serious problem. They are understood. Maybe because I was chosen. I wasn't kicked out anyway."

Another possible interpretation is that they lack framework to articulate these practices as sexism, as well as being influenced by heavy political education. Unlike Japan, feminism is not yet an issue even among intellectuals in China. Under socialism, as Zhijuan puts it, feminism is considered a "petty-bourgeois" idea

and incompatible with the primacy of class struggles. The whole literature and information of western feminism is carefully kept out from contemporary China.

If these women have perspectives to see the reality, they might have a better understanding of sexism. The statements by those who have ever taken the courses related to women's issues might show some possibility. Yet the number of my participants is too small to draw any conclusion about the effect of the courses. Brush et al.'s study on American undergraduate students who took a Women's Studies course shows that these women are already a highly selected group; hence the impact of the course is to reinforce and strengthen their beliefs rather than to resocialize them.6 Therefore possibly these Chinese students who have ever taken the courses related to women's issues were already, to some extent, conscious of feminist issues. In fact, two of the four women who took the courses say that they were already sensitive to the women's issues in China. More extended research should be done in this area to articulate whether the courses related to Women's Studies have significance in their perceptional changes toward gender roles.

Unlike the Chinese participants, the Japanese participants represent more ordinary students of diverse backgrounds. They come from the highly industrialized society with a mass higher education system, in which nearly 40% of the high school graduates, both male and female, go to college. Hence access is not so great a problem for Japanese women. Their seemingly more relaxed attitudes toward overseas study such as "cultural

exploration" can be explained by the availability of higher education in their home country.

Yet, as Fyjimura posits, a majority of women are still ghettoized into stereotyped subjects in female junior colleges which are of lower status and lead to lower paid jobs.7 Unlike China, the supply of male graduates has been sufficient to meet the demand; talents and skills of highly educated women have been less needed in Japan. Employers have had no reason to hire female graduates who represent a new labor force. Besides the Japanese government has paid very little attention to equalize occupational opportunities for women. As a result, higher education does not secure places for women in the Japanese occupational structure.

These Japanese women are more critically aware of their limited chances in a male dominated society. The one reason for the older women to come to the U.S. is that it is virtually impossible for them to go back to school in Japan. Most graduate schools usually admit the only newly graduates from their own universities based on a rigid hierarchical system in Japanese higher education. My interviews also reveal deep anxiety about uncertain futures. High degrees might be useless, especially for women, in the society of "diploma disease" with high unemployment rates of post graduates. Yet most women have expectations that overseas study might help them to acquire better opportunities if not in Japan, maybe elsewhere.

While the Chinese women seem to identify themselves primarily with genderless intellectuals, most Japanese women say that they were forced to behave feminine in Japan because of social and

psychological pressures. For some of them, their families especially mothers were an agent of these pressures. Unlike the Chinese women, politics and the state are not an everyday concern for the Japanese women. Instead they have suffered from their mothers' psychological dependency and desperate desire to control their children. It may reflect the pathological relationship between a mother and her child, which has emerged as an urgent problem in current Japanese families.8

Overseas study seems to give them a precious opportunity to challenge themselves away from these social and psychological pressures. Therefore I can see perceptional changes more clearly among the Japanese participants. For instance, Miyoko's remark is, more or less, shared by other women.

> Miyoko: I think I've changed a lot. Before in Japan, I really wanted to be a "lovely girl" not a pushy "big mouth". But now I can say clearly it's nonsense for women to shut up their mouths and suppress themselves in front of men.

They have tried out their personal freedom and explored the different culture and people, inspired by American women's positive attitudes toward their lives, their high career-orientation and self-assertiveness, as well as emphasis on self-expression in American culture and education.

Yet, it does not necessarily mean the Chinese women have been free from these socio-psychological pressures to reinforce their femininity. On the contrary, in terms of sexuality, they are much more restricted than the Japanese women. For the Chinese women, having an American boyfriend is unthinkable. If a woman is single, even if in her 30s or 40s, she is supposed not to have intimate relationships with men. Most of my participants tell me

how difficult it is to live as a single woman in a conservative society like China, where people constantly interfer in her privacy. Even in the US, they feel a Chinese student community keeps its eyes on them. They are afraid of being the subject of gossip.

The Japanese women seem free from such anxiety. One possible interpretation is that the Chinese women are strongly bound to their community; and they have a high possibility of carrying on their relationship with their fellow Chinese when they return to China because they are part of the highly selected group. Except the one who lives with an American landlady, the Chinese women live with Chinese housemates, while six of the Japanese women live with either Americans or foreign students other than Japanese. This finding somewhat reassures previous studies of Chinese students from Hong kong and Taiwan. Chinese students tend to live with other fellow Chinese. For instance, Anyi, an engineering student, says she has never had any contact with Americans since her professor and colleagues as well as her housemates are all Chinese.

The Japanese women do not have such a community, and they are more individualistic. The number of Japanese students (75 altogether) is too small to form an exclusive Japanese community. With more liberal attitudes toward sexuality, some of them have American boyfriends and see the relationship between the sexes in the American society critically in depth. 9

In the urbanized Japanese society, women can enjoy a certain degree of personal freedom which Chinese women can hardly get.

For example, Xiuying, like other Chinese women, says that she was very surprised to see American women smoking and drinking in public because these were considered exclusively male habits in China. Such surprise is not shared by the Japanese women. Generally women who live alone in cities away from their parents have greater freedom than those who remain with their parents. Five Japanese women had experiences of living alone in the major cities in their college and working lives, while all Chinese women lived with their parents until their marriage. During the Cultural Revolution, some women lived in the countryside away from their parents but under strict supervision.

In Japan, the number of single women in their late 20s and 30s is increasing.10 Furthermore, since the 1970s feminism has become one of the popular issues in the media and much of western feminist literature has been introduced in Japan. Whether they agree or disagree, feminism is a concern among Japanese intellectuals, as well as many of my participants. Because of post-war Americanization, the concept of western individualism became legitimate. Even though these women were encouraged to conform to the traditional norm of womanhood at home, once being away from the constraints in the reassuring environment, many begin to exercise their personal freedom to fulfill their independence without much reservation.

Both the Chinese and Japanese participants have to confront the Confucian norm of a "good wife and wise mother" deeply imprinted in traditional patriarchy. Their ambiguous attitudes toward femininity show how deeply they have internalized the stereotype especially in the private sphere, even though they are less

restricted by it in the public sphere. However these women as survivors of the system seem to have negotiated and sorted out conflicting ideologies imposed by their societies. For the Chinese women, genderless intellectual identity gives them a source of pride and power, although it is often abused by the state to restrict their personal freedom. For the Japanese women, the concept of individualism legitimates their exercise of personal freedom. Being caught up between tradition and modernity, these women who are struggling to find a way to express themselves and to pursue their career goals would certainly never give up their struggles. In order to make the best use of their opportunities, they would resist the society which attempts to make them conform to the patriarchal norm.

CONCLUSION

From my research, I find that the time spent in the U.S. and their field of study are less significant as a predictor of their perceptional changes; rather contact with Americans and exposure to American culture predict changes more.

One of the significant factors which affect the degree of contact with Americans and exposure to American culture is their marital status and living arrangement. In general, single women enjoy more freedom and greater mobility. For instance, five Japanese women have either long term relationship or short term affairs with American or foreign boyfriends while in the U.S. Through their personal experiences, they see gender relations in

the U.S. more deeply. None of the Chinese women, even single women, report such relations. On the contrary, married Chinese women who left their families in China point out their constant anxiety about their husbands and children, although most of them appreciate that they can concentrate on their study more in the U.S. without family burdens. Yet their constant psychological pressures often inhibit their excesize of personal freedom.

Another factor probably lies in the economic conditions of most Chinese students. They have to live meagerly with very tight budget. Many women save considerable amount from their small amout of assistantship to send American dollars for their families in China. Therefore, unlike their Japanese counterparts, the Chinese women cannot afford to spend money for going out with American or other foreign friends. The Chinese tendency of living with other fellow Chinese can be seen from their economic conditions. As they point out, the Chinese community at UB is certainly a constraint to their privacy. Yet, on the other hand, it gives them needed support and resources for survival.

Above all, exposure to American feminism through American women and the courses related to Women's Studies seems the most significant factor to change their perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. Yet, because of the limited sample for my research, I cannot generalize about my findings. More extended research is needed in order to examine the impact of overseas study, especially feminist education, on female foreign students because these women have a potential to be a forefront of women's rights movement in their own countries. In many societies,

feminist consciousness often emerged first among the highly educated intellectual women in professions.

Although the adjustment problem is not my research focus, I find several problems faced by these women. Except for the one who criticizes the obvious racist attitudes of the particular professor toward Oriental students, most students deny blatant sexism and racism on campus, nevertheless some still suffered from a subtle form of discrimination. They have had problems of social isolation and troubles with American professors and colleagues because of language and cultural barriers. Hence if I extend this research, I would like to identify the specific problems faced by Chinese and Japanese female students and the development of their survival strategies in the alien environment.

NOTES

1. According to the information provided by the International Student Office at UB, the gender distribution of the students from China (PRC) and Japan in the academic year of 1987 was as follows:

	Male	Female
China		
Undergraduate students	8	5
Graduates	226	65
Total	234	70
Japan		
Undergraduate students	12	24
Graduates	20	18
Total	32	42

Since the office did not allow me to check the student list on the ground of its confidentiality, I could not identify the gender distribution in each field of study. There is no gender specific statistics of the foreign students available nationally at this moment. Yet, according to Boyan's "Foreign Women in the U.S. Schools", the gender distribution of students from Asia is male 69% and female 31% (1979-80). While males concentrate in scientific and technical fields such as engineering, natural science, and agriculture, females concentrate in traditional subjects such as education, fine arts, health, and humanities.

1. The exception is Midori, who quit more than 10 years of her career as a nurse and decided to obtain a M.A. degree in order to gain a teaching position in a nursing college in Japan. Since no graduate training was available in Japanese nursing colleges, she had to come to the U.S. She is the only one with a clear career goal.

2. The plight of urban working women are examined by Croll and Wolf. See E. Croll, Chinese women since Mao (NY: ME Sharpe, 1983); M. Wolf, Revolution Postponed (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1985).

3. About the Chinese higher education system, see:
S. Pepper, China's University Post-Mao Ann arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1984.
S. Shirk, Competitive Comarades Berkely: Univ. of California Press, 1982.
M. Sidel, "Graduate Education in the People's Republic of China" Higher Education 12, 1983, pp.155-170.
J. Unger, Education Under Mao NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982.

4. Bee-Lan Chan Wang, "Chinese Women: The Relative Influence of Ideological Revolution, Economic Growth, and Cultural Change" Comparative Perspective of Third World Women by Lindsay ed. (NY:

Praeger, 1980), pp.96-122.

5. About the tension between China's development policy and women's status, see:
P. Andors, "The Four Modernizations and Chinese Policy on Women" Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 13, 2, April-June, 1981, pp.44-56
E. Croll, Ibid.
____ "Women in Rural Production and Reproduction in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and Tanzania" Signs 7,2, Winter 1981, pp.361-74.
____ Feminism and Socialism in China (NY: Routridge & Kegan, 1978)
K. Johnson, Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983).
M. Wolf, Ibid.

6. Brush et al. "The Paradox of Intension and Effect: A Women's Studies Course" Sign 13, 4, 1978, pp.870-83.

7. Fujimura, "Women's Participation in Higher Education in Japan" Comparative Education Review Nov., 1985, pp.471-89.
About women's education in Japan, also see, Fujii,"Education for Women" Japan Quarterly Vol. XXXIX, No.3,pp.300-10.

8. See Lebra Sugiyama, Japanese Women: Constraints and Fulfillment (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1983). Based on the ethonographic research on women in a small local community, she articulated that the discrepancy between the rising educational level of women and their limited occupational opportunities in Japanese society caused the phenomenon of "education mum" - the mothers' pathological dependency on their children, their fanatic devotion to their children's academic achievement, and their desire to live through their children.

9. Unlike the other Japanese women, Yukiko was opposed to pre-marital sex. "I think it's better for women to be virgin until marriage, since it is always the women who get hurt when they become pregnant." said she. Yet, she was against the feminist demand for legalization of contraceptive pills, which, from her view, will cause the increase of illicit sex.

10. According to the Sugawara's study, The Age of a New Family (Tokyo: Chuo Koron, 1986) based on the national census, the number of single career women in the late 20s and early 30s is increasing in the major urban cities. They are called "new singles" and no longer stigmatized as "old maids". Among women in their 20s, the number of those who "want to marry definitly" decreased from 31.9% to 23% during the decade (1968-1979). 32.9% of them supported the opinion that women did not need to marry if they could be economically independent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdalla, Saleh & Gibson. "The Relationship of Exposure to American Culture on the Attitude of Libyan Nationals towards the Role of Women in the Work Force." Contemporary Educational Psychology V.9, N.3, 1984, pp.294-302.

Altbach, Philip et al. Research on Foreign Students and International Study NY: Praeger, 1985.

Al-Qataee, Abdalla. "The Effect of Western Cultures on the Sex Role Identity of Saudi Arabians." Contemporary Educational Psychology V.9, N.3, 1984, pp.302-312.

Barber, Elinore et al., eds. Bridges to Knowledge: Foreign Students in Comparative Perspective Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984.

Boyan, Douglas.,ed. Profiles: The Foreign Student in the U.S. NY: Institute of international Education, 1981.

Boyan, Douglas. "Foreign Women in U.S. Schools." World Higher Education Communique 4, Winter, 1981, pp.21-24.

Byers, Philip. "Asian Invasion of American Campus - Why?" International Educational and Cultural Exchange 6, Spring, 1971, pp.58-70.

Chang, Hwa-Bao. "Attitudes of Chinese Students in the U.S." Sociology and Social Research 58, Oct. 1973, pp.66-77.

Chu, Hung-Ming et al. "A Study of Chinese Students' Adjustment in the U.S." Acta Psychologica Taiwanica 13, March 1971, pp.206-218.

Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC. An Introduction to Education in the PRC and the U.S., Educational Exchange. Wa. D.C.: CSCPRC, 1980.

Commings, William. "Going Overseas for Higher Education: The Asian Experiences." In Barber, Ibid., 1984.

Dixon, Johnson. "Asian Alumni Look Back on Their American Experiences." International Educational & Cultural Exchange 6, Summer, 1970,

Dunnett, S.C. ed. Factors Affecting the Adaptation of Foreign Students in Cross-Cultural Settings Buffalo: Council of International Studies, SUNY AB, 1981.

Finger, Thomas & Reed. Survey Summary: Students and Scholars for the PRC Currently in the U.S. Wa.D.C.: CSCPRC, 1981.

Fong, Stanley et al. "Sex Role Strain Personality Adjustment of

China-born Students in America." J of Abnormal Psychology V.74, 1969, pp.563-67.

Goldsmith, Jane & Shawcross. It Ain't Half Sexist, Mum. Women as Overseas Students in the UK London: World Univ. Service and UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs, 1985.

Graham, Morris. "Acculturative Stress among Polynesian, Asian, and American Students on the Brigham Young University, Hawaii." International Journal of Intercultural Relations 7, No.1, 1983, pp.79-104.

Hawkins, John. "Educational Exchange and the transformation of Higher Education in the PRC." In Barber, ibid., 1984, pp.19-31.

Heikenheimo & Shute. "The Adaptation of Foreign Students: Students' Views and Institutional Implications." Journal of College Student Personnel Vol.27, No.5, 1986, pp.399-406.

Hull, W. Frank. Foreign Students in the United States of America NY: Praeger, 1978.

Kang, Tai. :A Foreign Student Group as an Ethnic Community." International Review of Modern Sociology V.14, March, 1971.

_____. "Name Change and Acculturation: Chinese Students on an American Campus." Pacific Sociological Review V.14, 1971, pp.403-12.

Klein, Marjorie et al. "Far Eastern Students in a Big University Subculture within a Subculture." Science & Public Affairs 27, Jan. 1971, pp.10-19.

---- "The Foreign Student Adaptation Program: Social Experiences of Asian Students in the U.S." International Educational & Cultural Exchange 6, Winter, 1971, pp.77-90.

Kumagai, Fumie. "The Effects of Cross-cultural Education on Attitudes and Personality of Japanese Students." Sociology of Education 50, Jan. 1977, pp.44-47.

Lam, Man-Ping. The Problems of Chinese Students at the University of Illinois at Ulbana Champagne. Ph.D. Diss. Univ. of Illinois, 1979.

Liu, Yi-Rong Yong. Chinese Intellectuals' Sense of Mission and their Attitudes toward Foreign Study. Ph.D. Diss. UCLA, 1985.

Lulat, Y.G.M. et al. Governmental and Institutional Policies on Foreign Students Buffalo: Comparative Education Center, SUNY AB, 1986.

Namavar, Fereshteh. Sex-role Orientation of International Female Graduate Students and its Relationship with Depression of

Anxiety. Ed. thesis, Indiana Univ. 1984.

Niyekawa, A. Adjustment Problems of Male Students from Japan in Hawaii Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii, 1952.

Miller. "The Cross-cultural Students: Lessons in Human Nature." Bulletin of the Minninger Clinic 35, 1971, pp.128-131.

Perkins, Caroline et al. "A Comparison of the Adjustment Problems of Three International Student Groups." Journal of College Student Personnel Sept. 1977, pp.382-388.

Rowe & Sjoberg eds. International women Students: Perspectives for the 80s. Reports of the international Women Student Conference (Boston, 198 WA.D.C.: NAFSA, 1981.

Wei, Y. "Socio-Psychological Variables and inter-nation Migration: Findings from Interviewing Returnees in the Republic of China." Bulletin of the Sun Yat-Sen Cultural Foundation. 1971,7,pp.1-37.

White, Merry. The Japanese Overseas: Can they Go Home Again? NY: The Free Press, 1988.

Yeh, Eng-Kung. "Cross Cultural Adaptation and Personal Growth: The Case of Chinese Students." Acta Psychologica Taiwanica 1976, pp.95-104.

APPENDIX

Initially I made contact with more than 20 students from Japan and the PRC, but some of them refused to be interviewed because of their language deficiency, pressure of school work, or reluctance to be questioned by a stranger. At last, I was able to interview eight students from Japan and the PRC respectively. The interviews lasted for 40 minutes to 2 hours depending on the participant's willingness to talk. I interviewed these 16 students from fall, 1987 to spring, 1988. Except for the one who did not want to be taped, I recorded all my interviews while taking notes of the important points they made. Most participants were willing to answer my questions very openly and frankly. With some of them, I spent considerable time for chatting after I stopped the recorder. These informal conversations gave me much insights for these women's personal lives. I want to thank all the participants who shared their precious time with me.

All the names appeared on this paper are fictional.

This study is a preliminary research for my dissertation; Comparative Study of Female Students from Japan, the PRC, and Taiwan at an American University.